



Original Plan for Beacon Hill Park Returns to City

Date: Thursday, October 29, 2009

For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC – The City of Victoria is celebrating the return of the original plan for Beacon Hill Park. The 120 year old watercolour has had a long journey and will now be cared for by City Archives.

"Beacon Hill Park is a historic gem and it seems fitting this historical document, that envisioned the greatness of the Park, has come home," noted Mayor Dean Fortin.

When: Thursday, October 29, 2009 at 3 p.m.

Where: City Archives, #8 Centennial Square (near the stairwell of Centennial Parkade)

City Council, Royal BC Museum CEO Pauline Rafferty, archivists and City staff will gather.

According to Mayor John Grant, who wrote in his 1888 annual report "it is time in my opinion that a commencement should be made in beautifying Beacon Hill Park", improvements were needed. That year several projects were undertaken, including the construction of Fountain Lake, a rustic bridge and seats.

The following year, City Council called for tenders for a professional design. Architect Henry Cresswell won the competition and was awarded a \$200 prize. However, Council voted to adopt and purchase a plan by John Blair, a landscape gardener. By July, the Colonist newspaper reported that developments were underway in the park.

The 1889 plan is a beautiful watercolour rendering. The Victorian design features extensive paths, walkways and roads, a pavilion and grotto on the summit, three lakes and a lily pond, a large conservatory with manicured gardens, fountain and terraces, a zoological area and tennis lawns. The ambitious design was never fully carried out.

The plan was housed at the City's Parks Department for many years. In 1934, at a suggestion from the British Columbia Historical Society and before the City had its own archives, the plan was turned over to the Provincial Archives for safekeeping. It remained there for 75 years, receiving the benefit of expert conservation by Provincial Archives staff.

– 30 –

For More Information:

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